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Yugoslav Party Puts the Cart Before the Horse

The Party executive bureau met Wednesday and announced several changes in the way it would conduct its relations with other socio-political bodies. The bureau decided that both at the federal and republic level the party should initiate the process of "joint consultation and coordination" with socio-political organs--i.e., the state apparatus, the trade unions, the SAWPY and other mass organs. Representatives from the national assembly, collective state presidency, SAWPY, the trade union federation and the Yugoslav youth union were in attendance at the meeting. The new order, if implemented, will amount to an open system of party checks on these bodies. In the past party influence has mainly been applied by the uncoordinated actions of individual party members in these organizations, a situation that has allowed considerable freedom of movement.

The executive bureau also ordered that the central and regional party organizations take steps to correct the practice of many federal level party representatives who disassociate themselves from central decisions with which they disagree. The executive bureau promised to publicize the names of guilty individuals at its next session, presumably in the near future.

In the midst of these dramatic moves toward tightening party discipline, the party statutory commission also met and agreed to draft changes that would legalize the measures, seemingly ex-post factor. The tenth party congress, now scheduled for the spring of 1974, is the only body that can change the party statutes. With events moving so quickly, however, calls for a congress at an earlier date may soon appear.

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US Delegation in Albania

A group of women from the US Albanian colony (likely, from the Boston area) has been making the rounds of Albania's production centers, educational institutions, and the like since early October, according to recent Tirana domestic service

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announcements. The visit is unique, in part because it is one of the infrequent instances of Americans' travelling to Albania, but more importantly, because Tirana has seen fit to announce the trip.

Since 1967, when the US lifted restrictions on travel to Albania, Tirana, as part of its overall isolationist policy, has prohibited US citizens from entering Albania. The few Americans who have been allowed into the country--usually persons of Albanian heritage and presumably pro-regime--have been hosted without any public disclosures. Tirana's evident departure from previous policy in the handling of the current visit may foreshadow a more positive attitude toward unofficial contact with US citizens. At the same time, however, it would seem premature to see this move as a signal of any change in the official attitude toward the US.

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INTELLIGENCER ANNEX

Two Romanian Governmental Changes are Announced

The two personnel changes announced on 18 October in Bucharest are: (1) the appointment of First Deputy Foreign Minister George Macovescu to replace Foreign Minister Corneliu Manescu, and (2) the selection of Miron Constantinescu to become chairman of the Economic Council vice Manea Manescu, who was released from that post on 11 October to be both a deputy premier and chairman of the State Planning Committee. Neither change portends a shift in Romanian policy, nor does either change reflect an intra-party or intra-governmental power struggle.

The Foreign Ministry Switch: The appointment of the 59-year old Macovescu to replace Corneliu Manescu as foreign minister has long been expected. Manescu had held the post for nearly 11 years. Although some reports claim that Ceausescu's dissatisfaction led to Manescu's replacement, we doubt this. Instead, we expect him to be appointed to membership on the Council of State, headed by Ceausescu, where he will be an effective adviser.

If anything, Manescu's shift probably reflects Bucharest's recognition that the pace of East-West detente, best illustrated by the nearness of the preliminary ministerial talks in Helsinki and developing interest in a CSCE, requires a change and different skills. It probably also reflects the leadership's recognition that Macovescu will bring to the post both greater intellectual ability and political sophistication.

An attorney by training, Macovescu is a leading expert on European security matters, and has promoted a CSCE in his frequent foreign travels, most recently on 11 October in a full day of consultations on European security with State Department officials in Washington. (see Intelligencer, 17 October)

Well-known in major world capitals and Romania's Minister to the US during 1959-61, Macovescu is regarded as pro-West and is said to be his country's leading expert on American affairs.

He has earned high marks both for professionalism and discretion. Poised and assured, qualities which he again demonstrated in Washington last week, Macovescu expresses ideas carefully and forcefully. Although he is known as a cultivated intellectual, he has also developed a reputation for being a hard-headed political realist. These qualities will serve him well in his new assignment.

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The Economic Council Switch: The appointment of the 55-year old Constantinescu to replace Manea Manescu illustrates the Council's reduced importance since the establishment in July of the Supreme Council for Economic and Social Development. The appointment also returns to national-level prominence the Romanian version of a political "liberal."

Constantinescu has had a checkered career in the Romanian hierarchy. Ceausescu's predecessor, the late Gheorghiu-Dej, purged Constantinescu from his party posts as a "Stalinist" in July 1957 in the wake of the Malenkov-Molotov purge in the USSR. Yet, in 1961, a Dej speech, printed in the party daily Scinteia, claimed that Constantinescu "...intended to give the discussion on the documents of the Twentieth CPSU Congress... a direction towards the encouragement of an anarchial and petty bourgeois spirit."

During the period 1949-55, however, Constantinescu was an odd combination of two opposing trends. As president of the State Planning Commission, he was a rigid doctrinaire in economic planning, and he followed faithfully the Stalinist line of absolute control and centralization of the economy. From a nationalist point of view, however, he was inclined to oppose severe Soviet economic demands on Romania. Indeed, he signed the first agreements dissolving the Sovroms--exploitative joint stock companies--in Moscow in May 1954, and he was credited with reducing the Soviet economic burden on Romania.

Constantinescu can be expected to bring to his post both great intelligence and professional economic training (he has a doctorate in philosophy and economics). Although his "liberal" inclinations are not of the Ceausescu stripe, Constantinescu also can be expected to handle his new responsibilities with considerable acumen.

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